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# EDITORIAL

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**LITERATE RESEARCHERS**

IT APPEARS that those young men of scientific bent who have been kowtowing in single-hearted devotion to the fetish of research are beginning to be punished for neglecting the altars of the Muses. The call for investigators who can write as well as they can juggle test tubes or logarithms swells into clamor. Even in economics it is getting so nowadays that grace of phrase and gift of fancy are almost indispensable to A-1 rating. And now a publication of the Federal Department of Agriculture discloses that official attention has turned to "a glaring defect in the education of many applicants for professional positions in the Government Service." This fault is the inability of the applicants to "express themselves freely and clearly." W. W. Stockberger, director of personnel and business administration, remarks:

If a modicum of the time now devoted to the training of students to undertake research were devoted to training in the art of presenting in suitable form the results of investigation, a marked improvement in the clearness of the writing of students so trained would become evident.

It might take more than a modicum of the time to do that business; there are those who live by the pen who would argue with the worthy doctor that it would take at least two or three modicums. This, however, is of relatively small consequence. What does count is that those who employ the persons who conduct inquiries and write reports are beginning at last to discover that the finished product is sometimes less than satisfying.

It would be a fine thing if every applicant for a technical or professional job at Washington kept these lines of Horace constantly in mind:

Tum meæ si quid loquor audiendum

Vocis accedet bona pars—

If any should ask him what they mean he might refer the questioner to some good book of quotations. To himself, however, they ought to mean that the way to win praise is to say something worth hearing. To this might be added the corollary maxim: "The ideal bureaucrat is one who always can say something that somebody will think worth hearing."

Concerning the achievements of genius it may be said that matter is everything, manner nothing. An Einstein can do with a blackboard and a piece of chalk everything necessary to make relativity comprehended by an elect few. But most researchers are not geniuses. When they do find out something, as likely as not it isn't so; but, even if it is, it often amounts to little because inadequately set forth.

The discovery of this is also a beginning of wisdom. It is therefore most profoundly to be hoped that the younger generation of college students will forever destroy the bad old custom by which it was once possible to work up a thriving business writing themes for freshmen engineers at 50 cents a theme. Let freshman engineers and freshman scientists of all kinds write their own themes or flunk in the attempt.

—Reprinted from *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* with credit to the *New York Sun*, August 12, 1931.

**THE QUADRANGLE**

AT LAST the old unsightly army barracks has been completely removed from the section of the University grounds which is usually spoken of as the Quadrangle. Not one concrete pillar remains as a monument to those men who worked to rush the army barracks to completion back in 1918. The barracks has seen its day and served its purpose so it must give way to modern progress and beautification of the Campus.

For the past few weeks men have been busy plowing, grading, and disking the ground for the landscaping to be done. With the proposed engineering building in the background, the Quadrangle will undoubtedly be the most magnificent building arrangement on the Campus.

—C. N. F.

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*On page 12 of this issue we have presented a short biographical sketch of the late Edward Orton, Jr. This was prepared by Prof. Wm. T. Magruder, of the Department of Mechanical Engineering.*